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Viewing cable 06CAIRO2183, DEFENSE MINISTER TANTAWI ON IRAN, IRAQ, HAMAS,

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06CAIRO2183**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06CAIRO2183	2006-04-11 11:29	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

Appears in these articles:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 002183

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/10/2016

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SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER TANTAWI ON IRAN, IRAQ, HAMAS,
SUDAN AND FMF

Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: NEA Assistant Secretary Welch, accompanied by the Ambassador, discussed Iran, Iraq, Hamas, Sudan and the International Medical Center with Defense Minister Field Marshal Tantawi during an April 4 meeting. Responding to A/S Welch's caution on Iran's growing influence in the region, Tantawi asked how Egypt can counter it. Tantawi reiterated the offer to train Iraqi troops in Egypt, and Welch explained the difficulties with the GOE proposal. On Palestine, Tantawi urged the USG to continue financial support and give Hamas a chance to change. Welch stressed that Abu Mazen must take control of the border crossings and said that if Congress approves, USG humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people will increase. On Sudan, Welch urged the GOE to offer to send Egyptian troops to join a UN force in Darfur. Tantawi was open to the idea and promised to raise

it with the President. End summary.

¶2. (C) Iran's regional influence: A/S Welch told Tantawi that addressing Iran's nuclear file alone is no longer enough because Iran's interference in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine is growing. Welch said that in addition to supporting Hizballah, U.S. (vice Israeli) information shows that Iran also supports Hamas. While the amount of money Hamas receives is not substantial, the link must be watched, Welch said. He also said that Iranian infiltration in Iraq is strongest in the police forces and Interior Ministry, but noted that the Army is strong.

¶3. (C) Tantawi asked how Egypt might counter Iran's regional influence. A/S Welch urged the GOE to (1) strengthen political relations with a newly formed Iraqi Government, (2) work with neighbors (Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE) to influence tribes in Iraq, and (3) promote a more proactive Arab League involvement in Iraq. Tantawi promised to convey the USG's request. Tantawi also reiterated Egypt's offer to train Iraqi military forces in Egypt, complaining gently that significant numbers of Iraqi troops and police train in Jordan. Welch noted that it is not convenient for the troops to travel to Egypt for training. The Ambassador then asked Egypt, security permitting, to consider sending small teams to Iraq to provide training. Tantawi declined to commit, noting they would be a target and recalling the assassination of Egypt's Ambassador to Iraq. Tantawi promised to raise the matter with President Mubarak. The Ambassador said that any sign of support for Iraq, even providing a military liaison, would be useful.

¶4. (C) Syria: Tantawi asserted that Bashar al Assad is cooperating more on securing the borders. A/S Welch disagreed, noting that the Syrian-Iraqi border is more secure because U.S. and Iraqi forces are operating in the Euphrates Valley.

¶5. (C) Israel/Palestine: A/S Welch thanked the GOE for providing excellent security on the border with Gaza, and noted that Israel also acknowledges the improvement. Tantawi said that Israel causes some of the security problems with its assassinations. Welch responded that Abu Mazen's lack of control over security at the border crossings remains a big problem and asked Egypt to press him to take charge. Egypt, the EU, and Abu Mazen must control border crossing security, Welch stressed. When Tantawi asked if Abu Mazen is strong enough to handle this, Welch said yes. Tantawi then conceded that if Israel closes border crossings because of security concerns, it would be an Egyptian, and not just a Palestinian problem.

¶6. (C) Tantawi asked the USG to give Hamas a chance to change and asked what Hamas should do to show cooperation. Tantawi also asked how Israel would respond to a gesture from Hamas. After urging the GOE to ask Israel this question directly, Welch noted that security is a priority and efforts to bolster it would be welcome. Welch said that if Hamas continues to say one thing on security and do another, Israel will respond. If Hamas fails, it will be because the Palestinian people reject them for failing to meet their needs. Tantawi argued that because Hamas succeeded democratically, the government must be allowed to work. An electoral victory, Welch said, does not mean the USG must agree with Hamas's positions. When Tantawi pressed for the continuation of financial support the Palestinians, Welch said that with Congressional approval, the USG would increase its humanitarian assistance in the coming weeks.

¶7. (C) Sudan: A/S Welch said Egypt should support a successful peace process in Abuja, but should not allow a veto on the use of UN forces in Darfur. Welch urged the GOE to offer Egyptian troops for a UN force in Darfur. Signaling receptiveness, Tantawi promised to raise the proposal with President Mubarak. (Note: During an April 4 visit to Sudan, Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit said Egypt would be willing to consider increasing the number of observers (in the military or civil police) serving with the AU forces. On USG pressure

to send UN forces to Darfur, Aboul Gheit said this would need to be decided in light of developments, including financing and the availability of sufficient African and Arab troops. End note.)

¶8. (C) International Medical Center: Tantawi asked A/S Welch to help Egypt get approval to treat third country nationals at IMC. Welch did not make a commitment, but said the State Department would address the matter step-by- step.

¶9. (U) A/S Welch cleared this message.
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